

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00
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SECDEF
INFO DA
CDR BRL ABERDEEN PROVING GRD MD
CDR DARCOM ALEXANDRIA VA
CDR PICATINNY ARSENAL NJ
CDR USAARMCOM ROCK ISLAND IL
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
USLOSACLANT
CINCLANT
DIR AMSAA ABERDEEN PROVING GRD MD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 0015

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO
SUBJECT: AD HOC COMMITTEE (AHC) ON EQUIPMENT INTEROPERABILITY--
155MM AMMUNITION INTERCHANGEABILITY

REF: A.) USNATO 5543 DTG 131745Z OCT 76; B.) STATE 223693
DTG 092210Z SEP 76; C.) USNATO 6295 DTG 181105Z NOV 76 (NOTAL);
D.) USNATO 6498 DTG 271050Z NOV 76 (NOTAL); E.) USNATO 6842
DTG 141637Z DEC 76.

SUMMARY. THE AD HOC COMMITTEE (AHC) ON EQUIPMENT INTEROPER-
ABILITY MEETS ON JANUARY 21, 1977. WE ANTICIPATE THE FRENCH
PROPOSAL TO STUDY 155MM AMMUNITION INTERCHANGEABILITY WILL
AGAIN BE A MATTER FOR DISCUSSION. GIVEN GENERAL AHC OPPOSI-
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TION TO EXPANDING ITS ACTIVITIES, A WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT
IT IS THE FRENCH WHO ARE "OUT OF STEP" IN THIS 155MM MATTER,
THE LOW LIKELIHOOD THAT FRENCH AMMUNITION INCOMPAT-
IBILITY CAN BE RESOLVED BY AHC FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM,
AND A SOMEWHAT ISOLATED US POSITION WITHIN THE AHC
STEMMING FROM OUR STRONG EFFORTS CONCERNING THE EXTEN-
SION OF COMMITTEE LIFE, WE PROPOSE TO REMAIN GENERALLY
APART FROM THE 155MM ISSUE UNTIL THE SITUATION BECOMES
BETTER DEFINED. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON COMMENT/
CONCURRENCE BY JANUARY 18, 1977. END SUMMARY.

1. BACKGROUND:

A. DURING ITS MEETING OF OCTOBER 7, 1976 (REF A), THE AHC, AFTER A DISCUSSION ON THE FRENCH PROPOSAL TO STUDY THE INTERCHANGEABILITY OF CONVENTIONAL 155MM AMMUNITION, NOTED A REPORT BY THE SECRETARY OF THE NAAG (LLOYD) POINTING OUT THAT THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE FRENCH COMBUSTIBLE CARTRIDGE CASE CAN NOT BE FIRED FROM THE TRIPARTITE (GERMANY, ITALY AND UK) OR US GUNS. AS A RESULT OF NUMEROUS TECHNICAL EXCHANGES, FRANCE HAD PROPOSED DESIGN MODIFICATIONS TO THE TRIPARTITE AND US GUNS BUT THESE HAD BEEN REJECTED. IN THE VIEW OF THE NAAG SECRETARY, THE MOST FEASIBLE WAY TO ACHIEVE INTEROPERABILITY WOULD BE FOR FRANCE TO MODIFY THE DESIGN OF THE GCT 155 CHAMBER AND CARTRIDGE CASE.

B. THE FRENCH, ON THE OTHER HAND, STRESSED THE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS THEY HAD MADE TO FACILITATE THE ADOPTION OF INTERCHANGEABLE 155MM AMMUNITION, EXPRESSED REGRET THAT OTHER NATIONS HAD NOT MADE THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO THEIR GUNS, AND NOTED THAT THIS MATTER WAS IMPORTANT LOGISTICALLY, REQUIRED AN ACCOMMODATION FROM ALL PARTIES FOR SOLUTION, AND SHOULD INVOLVE THE AHC. THE US PROPOSED THAT PANEL IV (SURFACE-TO-SURFACE
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ARTILLERY) OF THE NAAG PROVIDE A REPORT ON THE PROBLEM. THE AHRC AGREED TO THIS PROPOSAL AND TO MONITOR THE SITUATION.

C. PANEL IV, WITH NAAG APPROVAL, HAS NOW SUBMITTED ITS REPORT (AC/297-D/22 DATED 17 DECEMBER 1976) TO THE AHC. THIS REPORT IS ESSENTIALLY AN EARLIER REPORT PREPARED BY PANEL IV ON THIS SUBJECT WHICH WAS CIRCULATED AS ANNEX TO AC/225-D/444 ON JUNE 21, 1976. BECAUSE THE ORIGINAL REPORT CONTAINS NUMEROUS TECHNICAL DETAILS, THE NAAG HAS SUMMARIZED THE OVERALL 155MM ARTILLERY AMMUNITION SITUATION AS FOLLOWS:

--MATERIAL IN SERVICE. INTERCHANGEABILITY OF 155MM AMMUNITION NOW IN SERVICE HAS BEEN FULLY ACHIEVED AND THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDIZATION EXISTS FOR THIS CALIBER (STANAG 2839).

--MATERIAL UNDER DEVELOPMENT OR BEING INTRODUCED. ALL DEVELOPMENTAL AMMUNITION IS EXPECTED TO BE INTERCHANGEABLE TO A SATISFACTORY DEGREE IN THE XM-198 (US), FH-70, SP-70 (FRG/UK/IT) AND THE GCT 155MM (FR) GUNS, EXCEPT THAT THE XM-198, FH-70 AND SP-70 CANNOT AS PRESENTLY DESIGNED UTILIZE THE FRENCH COMBUSTIBLE CARTRIDGE CASE. IN ORDER TO VERIFY THE

DEGREE OF INTERCHANGEABILITY OF DEVELOPMENTAL AMMUNITION, EXTENSIVE FIRING TRIALS WILL HAVE TO BE CONDUCTED. COMMON FUNDING OF SUCH TRIALS UNDER NATO IS NOT POSSIBLE; HOWEVER, TRIALS BY INTERESTED NATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE AND THE RESULTS WILL BE DISSEMINATED TO OTHER NATIONS WITHIN NATO.

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--FUTURE STANDARDIZATION EFFORTS. TO ACHIEVE FULL INTERCHANGEABILITY OF 155MM AMMUNITION TO BE DEVELOPED IN THE FUTURE AND TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES IN APPROACH TO CHARGE SYSTEMS AND SHELL FAMILIES, EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO PRODUCE A STANAG ON BALLISTIC PARAMETERS OF THIS AMMUNITION. WHILE THIS STANAG WILL HELP NATIONS DEVELOP FUTURE AMMUNITION WHICH IS FULLY INTERCHANGEABLE, IT CAN, IN FACT, HAVE NO EFFECT ON AMMUNITION DEVELOPMENTS ALREADY COMPLETED OR IN THE COURSE OF COMPLETION.

D. ADDITIONALLY, DURING ITS JUNE MEETING, THE NAAG INVITED GERMANY, ITALY, THE UK AND THE US TO UPDATE THE QUADRILATERAL MOU ON 155MM ARTILLERY AMMUNITION
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WITH THE AIM OF:

--RESOLVING EXISTING DIFFERENCES IN CHARGE SYSTEMS AND SHELL FAMILIES;

--ACHIEVING FULL INTEROPERABILITY OF THE AMMUNITION UNDER DEVELOPMENT;

--DRAFTING A STANAG ON 155MM ARTILLERY AMMUNITION TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR INTERCHANGEABILITY. IT IS ANTICIPATED THIS UPDATED MOU (WHICH WILL SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR THE FORTHCOMING STANAG) WILL BE AGREED IN MARCH 1977.

2. GIVEN THE REPORT TO THE AHAC, WE ANTICIPATE THIS SUBJECT WILL BE AN AGENDA ITEM FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON JANUARY 21, 1977. WE AGREE WITH WASHINGTON'S VIEW (REF B) THAT WHILE THE BASIC INCOMPATIBILITY OF THE FRENCH CASELESS AMMUNITION WITH THE WEAPONS OF THE OTHER ALLIES (XM-198 AND FH/SP-70) IS NOT LIKELY TO BE RESOLVED BY AHC FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM, IT CAN DO NO HARM TO BRING THE SITUATION INTO THE OPEN SINCE THE FRENCH PROPOSED THE ACTION AND ARE THE ONES WHO ARE "OUT OF STEP". THIS AIRING IS BEING ACCOMPLISHED.

3. BECAUSE THE REPORT BY PANEL IV CONTAINS NEITHER NEW INFORMATION NOR RECOMMENDATIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT THE BALL IS BACK IN THE FRENCH COURT, AND IT IS THEY WHO WILL HAVE TO PROPOSE FURTHER ACTION. OUR INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH THE FRENCH NADREP (JAMET) INDICATE THAT THE FRENCH HAVE NOT DECIDED HOW TO PROCEED NEXT AND ARE PERHAPS PUZZLED OVER AN APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION. THEY, JUST AS WE, MUST PERCEIVE THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN ACTIVE AHC INVOLVEMENT IN THIS AREA WILL BE COOLY RECEIVED BY MOST OTHER NATIONS; FIRST, BECAUSE CONFIDENTIAL

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OF THE GENERAL OPPOSITION OF THE AHC TO UNDERTAKE NEW TASKS, AND SECOND, BECAUSE OF THE BELIEF THAT IT IS THE FRENCH WHO MUST "COME ABOARD" IN THIS MATTER.

4. WE PROPOSE, GIVEN WASHINGTON CONCURRENCE, TO REMAIN GENERALLY APART FROM THIS ISSUE UNTIL THE SITUATION BECOMES BETTER DEFINED. OUR RATIONALE IS THAT WE HAVE BECOME SOMEWHAT ISOLATED WITHIN THE AHC BECAUSE OF OUR STRONG EFFORTS CONCERNING THE EXTENSION OF THE LIFE OF THE COMMITTEE (REFS C AND D). TO ALLY OURSELVES PREMATURELY WITH FRANCE IN A MATTER WHICH WILL LIKELY BE CONTENTIOUS, AND WHICH HAS LITTLE REAL LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ACCEPTED OR OF PAYOFF IF ACCEPTED, COULD PROVE TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT ADDITIONAL WORK IMPROVES THE CHANCES FOR A FURTHER EXTENSION OF COMMITTEE LIFE IN THE SPRING, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE,

IN THIS CASE, SUFFICIENT TIME TO OBSERVE FROM THE
SIDELINES AND WATCH THE GAME PLAN DEVELOP. ADDITION-
ALLY, WE HAVE RECOMMENDED (REF E) THE US SUPPORT A
MEETING OF WORKING GROUP 3 ON 27-28 JANUARY 1977 TO
ADDRESS 105MM TANK GUN AMMUNITION MATTERS. THIS
"REACTIVATION" OF WG/3 FROM ITS LONG DORMANCY SHOULD
PROVIDE SUFFICIENT GROUP ACTIVITY FOR THE PRESENT.
ONCE THE SITUATION CONCERNING 155MM AMMUNITION CLARI-
FIES, WE WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO FIRM UP A
US APPROACH. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON COMMENT/
CONCURRENCE BY JANUARY 18, 1977. STRAUSS-HUPE

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